

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



# News Release

## *Midwest Region*

### *External Affairs Office*

**Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building, 1 Federal Drive, Ft. Snelling, MN 55111-4056**  
**612/713-5360 Fax: 612/713-5280 <http://midwest.fws.gov>**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
December 9, 2010

Contact:  
Tina Shaw, 612-713-5331

### **Indiana Beagle Club Fined for Pole Trapping Birds of Prey**



Pole trap used for illegal trapping of migratory birds.  
USFWS Photo.

A beagle club based in Underwood, Ind., paid \$9,450 in fines to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to satisfy federal violations of the illegal take and attempted take of migratory birds, through the use of metal leg hold traps. This form of illegal trapping has a profound impact on migratory birds and occurs across the country in hunting club operations and game bird farms.

The same metal leg hold traps used legitimately by trappers to take small game were illegally employed by this group as a means of predator control for protected birds of prey such as hawks and owls. This method, commonly referred to as “pole trapping,” involves the placing of a metal leg hold trap on an elevated structure, typically a pole, where hawks or owls would perch. The bird lands on the pole and the armed trap closes on the bird’s legs.

The club president, and several members of the hunt club, monitored such traps on club property, with the intent of killing hawks, owls and other birds of prey and protect against predation of the rabbit population on club property.

These violations and associated fines stem from an investigation by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (INDNR) and the USFWS Office of Law Enforcement that began in February 2009, when INDNR Conservation Officer Mack Spainhour received an anonymous tip concerning a great horned owl found dead. Both of the great horned owl’s legs were trapped in a metal leg hold trap.

During the course of the investigation, eight metal leg hold traps were documented to have been placed on poles on the Club's property and all eight traps were armed when located by law enforcement. One red-shouldered hawk was discovered by investigators, with both of the red-shouldered hawk's legs trapped in a metal leg trap. The hawk was euthanized due to the extensive injuries to its legs.

Tom Tidwell, USFWS Resident Agent in Charge for Michigan, Indiana and Ohio notes that the success of this case is due to an active and informed public. Tidwell thanked the public for their interest in protecting wildlife, saying that "Wildlife are protected for all of us and when one person or organization takes it upon themselves to kill protected wildlife it affects everyone."

To learn more about the Indiana *Turn in a Poacher or Polluter Program* or report a violation, visit <http://www.in.gov/dnr/lawenfor/2745.htm> or call 1-800-TIP-IDNR.

*The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit <http://www.fws.gov>.*

-FWS-